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HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

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SAM NEWHOUSE

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1. What did police say a man stole from a Philadelphia Gas Works truck?

2. How long has it been since Flyers' rookie Travis Konecny last scored a goal?

3. What restaurant did Drake and Jennifer Lopez have dinner at this week?

3 things you need to know

GERMAN POLICE HUNT ASYLUM-SEEKER OVER MARKET ATTACK

1 German police are looking for an asylum-seeker from Tunisia after finding an identity document under the driver's seat of a truck that plowed into a Berlin Christmas market and killed 12 people, officials and security sources said on Wednesday. The federal prosecutor's office offered a reward of up to $104,000 for information leading to the capture of the suspect, whom it identified as 24-year-old Anis Amri. "Beware: He could be violent and armed!" the prosecutor's office said in a statement, in which it described Amri as 5-foot-8, with black hair and brown eyes. Amri's father and security sources told Tunisia's Radio Mosaique that he had left Tunisia seven years ago as an illegal immigrant and had spent time in prison in Italy. REUTERS

US SAYS 6.4M SIGNED UP FOR OBAMACARE FROM NOV. 1 TO DEC. 19

2 Roughly 6.4 million consumers signed up for Obamacare insurance on Healthcare.gov from Nov. 1 to Dec. 19 indicating "clear demand for quality, affordable coverage," the U.S. government said on Wednesday. The number of people signing up for Jan. 1, 2017, coverage during this period represents an increase of 400,000 compared with the same period a year ago, the government said. Total plan selections through the extended deadline of Dec. 19 include 2.05 million new consumers and 4.31 million returning consumers actively renewing their coverage. Healthcare.gov sells plans for 39 states while the other states run their own exchanges. REUTERS

FACEBOOK: GOVERNMENT REQUESTS FOR ACCOUNT DATA RISE 27 PERCENT

3 Facebook Inc. said on Wednesday that government requests for user account data rose 27 percent in the first half of 2016 compared to the second half of last year, with U.S. law enforcement agencies topping the list. Government requests for account data globally rose to 59,229 from 46,710 and more than half contained a non-disclosure order that prohibited the social networking website from notifying users. Requests for content restriction, the number of items restricted for violating local laws, decreased by 83 percent from the second half of 2015, Facebook said in a blog post. The Paris attacks in November last year elevated the number of content restriction requests. REUTERS

Donte Rollins SAM NEWHOUSE

Philly man who spent decade in prison freed

Donte Rollins, imprisoned for 10 years for attempted murder, was released Wednesday after an appeals court ordered him freed.

SAM NEWHOUSE
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sam.newhouse@metro.us

Donte Rollins has spent a third of his life behind bars for shooting and paralyzing a 6-year-old boy; he walked out of a Center City courthouse Wednesday as a free man.

An appellate court ordered Rollins' release after reviewing compelling evidence that he had nothing to do with the 2008 crime.

Rollins' mother, aunt and supporters broke out into applause as he walked out of the courthouse a free man.

"Hell, pure hell," was how Rollins, 29, described his decade in prison. "I'm still a little upset because it should never have happened, but thanks to my lawyers and my family who stuck with me and supported me through everything, it's finally over, so I'll be cool."

"Hell, pure hell," was how Rollins, 29, described his decade in prison.

Rollins said that he just wants to spend time with his family, get something to eat and get to take a warm bath.

Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams, defense lawyer Michael Wiseman and representatives from the Pennsylvania Innocence Project worked to secure his release.

Williams announced Wednesday morning that prosecutors were withdrawing all charges.

"Today's decision is the right ruling and it reminds us that we must always be vigilant, and we cannot and should not be afraid to question ourselves, question our decisions and even question the guilt of someone who has been convicted," Williams said in a statement.

"Liberty is one of the inalienable rights of each American as enunciated in the Declaration of Independence, written and signed just blocks from where we stand today," he continued. "We must be certain if we are going to take it from someone."

Rollins' release comes seven months after his conviction was called into question by the district attorney's office.

In April, Williams said the conviction "cannot stand because although multiple witnesses, videotapes, receipts, and cellphone records establish Mr. Rollins was several miles away from the shooting, the jury heard and saw virtually none of that evidence," according to the Pennsylvania Innocence Project.

But Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge Rayford Means refused the DA's request for a new trial.

"Luckily, the Superior Court recognized the injustice and — again with the agreement of the district attorney — summarily reversed the trial court and vacated Mr. Rollins' conviction," Marissa Boyers Bluestine, legal director of the Pennsylvania Innocence Project, said in a statement. "We are thrilled he will spend the holidays with his loving family."

Rollins was identified as being seen near the scene of the January 2006 shooting, which left Jabar Wright, then 6 years old, a quadriplegic. His grandfather was believed to be the intended target.

Rollins was convicted of attempted murder and other offenses and sentenced in 2008 to a maximum of 125 years in prison, despite efforts by the family to introduce what they considered exculpatory evidence, including surveillance video footage of Rollins elsewhere at the time of the shooting and receipts proving he was shopping at the time, according to Philly.com. But that evidence was not introduced at trial, according to the Pennsylvania Innocence Project.

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BRIEF

Man accused of stealing gas-leak detectors from PGW truck

A 34-year-old man is accused of ripping off two gas-leak detectors and a GPS system from a Philadelphia Gas Works truck just down the street from his home.

Police charged William Cook with breaking into a PGW vehicle parked on South Second Street near Moore Street at about 5:45 a.m. on Nov. 25 — a location two blocks away from his residence on South Fourth Street.

Cook went straight for the equipment in the truck, which was worth an estimated $3,000, police said.

William Cook. PPD

On Dec. 7, two officers who observed video of the theft tentatively identified the suspect as Cook, whom they knew from previous encounters.

After reviewing more photos of Cook, the identification was confirmed and he was arrested Monday, police said.

Court records showed Cook has multiple previous arrests for theft.

PGW did not respond to a request for comment.

SAM NEWHOUSE

State prepares to issue medical marijuana permits

The Philadelphia area could be home to the most medical marijuana dispensaries in the state when health officials begin next year to issue permits for such outlets. State Health Secretary Karen Murphy said Wednesday during a news conference that the state will begin accepting applications on Feb. 20 for permits to grow or sell medical marijuana.

The state plans to award 27 permits statewide during the first phase of the program. Each permit holder will be allowed to operate dispensaries in three locations. More than a third of those permits are to be issued in the southeastern region of the state, according to the health department's regulations. If the permit holders open three dispensaries each, the Philadelphia area could be home to 30 sites.

Three permits will be issued to companies planning to locate in the city. Medical marijuana can be prescribed for patients afflicted with 17 health conditions, according to legislation signed in April by Gov. Tom Wolf. The conditions include such serious health problems as Parkinson's disease, cancer, glaucoma and epilepsy. The legislation allows for up to 150 dispensaries and 25 growers across the state. State officials said they expect as many as 1,000 applications for the permits.

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ISTOCK

Two shot dead minutes apart in West Philly

Within 15 minutes, two men suffered multiple gunshot wounds on opposite sides of the neighborhood.

ALEXIS SACHDEV
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Two men were gunned down early Wednesday within 15 minutes of each other on opposite sides of West Philadelphia, according to police.

The first shooting happened about 1 a.m. on the 6000 block of Allman Street in Southwest Philly. Officers responding to an address there found a man on the ground with multiple gunshot wounds.

The 49-year-old victim was taken to Penn Presbyterian Hospital, where he died of his injuries, police said.

Minutes later, officers responded to reports of gunshots near 51st and Market streets in Cobbs Creek. There, they found a 27-year-old man with multiple gunshot wounds to his head, slumped in a parked Toyota Camry with the engine running.

The victim was shot at close range, according to CBS Philly.

"It appears, based on the five shell cases, that the shooter was in very close proximity to the victim and was firing from point-blank range," Philadelphia Police Chief Inspector Scott Small said. "And due to the fact that this victim was hit multiple times in the head, it appears that he was the intended target,"

Police said they believe the car belonged to someone else.

It's not clear whether the two shootings are related, investigators said.

No arrests have been reported and the identities of the two victims haven't been disclosed by police.

As of Tuesday, there have been 269 homicides in the city, compared to last 265 over the same period last year.

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University launches tool to show how fake news spreads

News and tech companies are trying to tackle fake news and have formed a coalition to improve the quality of information on social media.

GETTY IMAGES

Researchers at Indiana University have developed a new tool that shows how fake news and unverified stories spread through social media.

The search engine, dubbed Hoaxy, is the latest effort to combat the proliferation of fake news, which proliferated during the presidential campaign, with one bogus post-Election Day story sparking a real-life event when a gunman fired shots into a Washington, D.C., restaurant.

"It is a very serious problem," said Filippo Menczer, the director of the university's Center for Complex Networks and Systems Research, which launched Hoaxy.

Misinformation and propaganda are not new, but Menczer said social media has added a new component because the information is pre-selected to be in line with people's own opinions.

"Social media makes it more likely that I am more exposed to false information that I am likely to believe," he added.

Hoaxy does not determine whether a story is real but it shows how it is spread online and shows related fact-checking.

The free website, Hoaxy.iuni.iu.edu, can be used by reporters, researchers and the public. If a user suspects a story is false they can search it in the website to see how it was spread and to what degree it went viral.

"There is no editorial judgment," Menczer said in an interview. "We don't look at the claims, or vet them, or say they are true or false."

It examines websites, compiled by news organizations and fact-checking sites, that are known to post satire, hoaxes or conspiracy theories. It also tracks links to the stories on Twitter and Facebook so users can see how often the stories have been shared.

"You can observe who are the hubs, who are the main spreaders and most influential who have spread these claims and fact-checks," said Menczer.

Menczer said he started looking into the phenomenon of false news in a research experiment several years ago. He created a website with celebrity stories clearly marked as fake and promoted them on social bookmarking websites that were popular at the time. REUTERS

NC legislature debates repeal of transgender bathroom law

North Carolina's Senate Republicans on Wednesday proposed repealing the state's law restricting transgender restroom access, but outraged the law's opponents by adding a provision to temporarily ban cities from passing measures to support transgender rights.

The legislation filed by Senate President Phil Berger followed hours of closed-doors talks among Republicans, who met in a special session to consider scrapping the law that has put North Carolina at the center of America's debate over transgender rights.

GETTY IMAGES

The state in March became the first to bar transgender people from using public restrooms that match their gender identity, citing traditional values and a need for public safety. Opponents called it mean-spirited and unnecessary.

National backlash was swift and fierce, leading to boycotts that were blamed for millions of dollars in economic losses for North Carolina, as major sporting events such as the National Basketball Association All-Star Game were moved out of state.

The pushback was widely cited as the reason Republican Gov. Pat McCrory lost his re-election bid in November to Democrat Roy Cooper, who called for the repeal of the law known as House Bill 2, or HB 2.

But action was delayed in both legislative chambers on Wednesday, creating an air of uncertainty.

REUTERS

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NYC teen aims high during 100th year of Girl Scout Cookies

Girl Scout Cookie season is underway and ends Jan. 22; online sales run from Jan. 3 to April 15.

AMANDA MIKELBERG
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Jeovanna DeShong Carter plans to crush the competition with her goal of 1,000 boxes. GIRL SCOUTS OF GREATER NEW YORK

To honor the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scout Cookie, one of the country's top cookie sellers has set her sales goal at 1,000 boxes — crushing her 2014 record of over 700 boxes.

"My entire living room gets flooded with Girl Scout Cookies. I put little thank you notes on each box," 15-year-old Jeovanna DeShong-Conner told Metro. "You have to be organized. You have to be networking — finding connections for people who are want to take the [order forms] to their jobs."

The Brooklyn teen gets her foot in the door early where people tend to gather and are in charitable moods, such as her godmother's church choir rehearsal. She also engages in passive promotion by simply wearing her Girl Scout sweatshirt to school in at Poly Prep Country Day School in Bay Ridge.

"A lot of people want to buy cookies just from that," she said.

The century-old tradition to raise money for the troop activities and supplies began in 1917 with their first recorded bake sale, just five years after the first meeting of the Girl Guide troop in Savannah, Georgia. Operation cookie went coast-to-coast in 1937, contracting bakers from around the country to produce for the Girl Scout Cookie boxed brand.

Now only two bakers share the cookie production — both coming up with their own version of the new S'mores cookie for 2017.

In 2015, the Girl Scouts of America made $800 million in cookie sales. Scouts sold 1.274 million boxes of cookies in the Greater New York area alone, said Meridith Maskara, who runs the cookie program as chief operating officer of Girl Scouts of New York. She added that Samoas and Thin Mints remain all-time favorites.

A big driver is the two-year-old Digital Cookie platform that allows girls to set up their own online sales portals.

For the expanded version, visit metro.us

Which cookie is your favorite?

In this 100th year of Girl Scout cookie sales, Metro would like to know which is your favorite among the many varieties. Cast your vote in the Metro poll at Metro.us/girl-scout-cookies

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Cause of deadly fireworks blasts still unknown

Forty-six of the injured remain hospitalized, while 18 of the dead have yet to be identified due to the severe nature of their burns, said state Interior Minister Jose Manzur.

A soldier and search dog inspect the disaster site in Tultepec, Mexico. GETTY IMAGES

Forensic investigators scoured the charred remains of a fireworks market outside Mexico City on Wednesday for clues to what caused a series of massive blasts that killed at least 32 people, the third fiery accident there in 11 years.

Dozens of people were injured in Tuesday's disaster at the San Pablito open-air market, which was crowded with shoppers just before Christmas.

A smell of burning hung over the remains of the market where investigators dressed in white protective gear, police and medical personnel searched through twisted metal frames and the wreckage of stalls. Soldiers with dogs appeared to be looking for human remains.

Alejandro Gomez, the state attorney general, told Mexican television it was unclear what caused the explosions, adding he could not corroborate accounts pointing to a detonation at one stall that may have begun a chain reaction.

Video of the blasts showed a spectacular flurry of pyrotechnics exploding high into the sky, like rockets in a war zone, as a massive plume of charcoal-gray smoke billowed out from the site.

The federal attorney general's office opened an investigation, saying that there were six separate blasts.

Alberto Teres, owner of one of few stalls remaining, saw the flames leap from stall to stall. "The only thing you could do was run," he said.

A dozen people are still missing, Gomez said.

REUTERS

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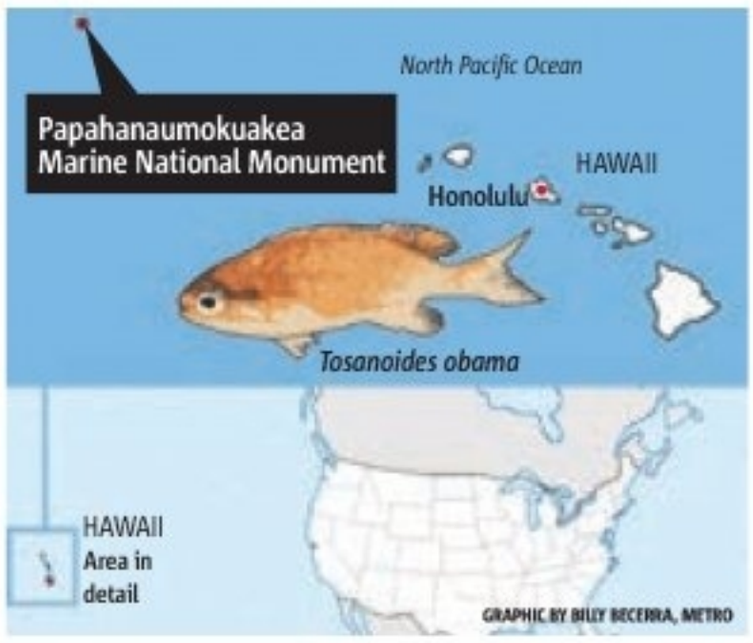
President Obama nets his second namesake fish



President Barack Obama may see his Affordable Care Act scaled back or repealed after he leaves office next month, but there will always be the lasting legacy of the Obama fish.

The newly discovered species was found in the coral reefs of Northwestern Hawaii.

Marine biologist Richard Pyle has named a new species of fish he found in June while scuba diving in Hawaii after the outgoing president. The president was born in Honolulu.

The tiny fish, Tosanoides obama, was found near the Kure Atoll in the Papahanaumokuakea Marine National Monument in Northwestern Hawaii.

The pinkish basslet fish has a blue spot on its dorsal fin and is the only known fish that calls the Papahanaumokuakea home. In fact, only five have been seen by scientists since their discovery six months ago.

In August, Obama quadrupled the size of the marine region that was developed by President George W. Bush in 2006. Now at 582,578 square miles, it is the largest protected area on Earth, with bans on commercial fishing within it.

This isn't the first foray into the animal kingdom for Obama's name — or even his first fish. He also has a namesake spider, parasitic worm and extinct lizard.

His first fish, a freshwater darter indigenous to eastern North American, was named after him in 2012 when it and four other darter species were discovered. The others were named after former Vice President Al Gore and former Presidents Jimmy Carter, Theodore Roosevelt and Bill Clinton. NIKKI M. MASCALI

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Our theories about J. Lo and Drake

The latest piece of gossip from the rumor mill is that Jennifer Lopez and rapper Drake are dating. According to "Entertainment Tonight," they had dinner together at the West Hollywood restaurant Delilah on Monday evening, and last week Drake posted a selfie of the pair with a heart-eye emoji underneath it. This is the kind of rumor that should excite us — two huge celebs hooking up — but it just doesn't. This year has been taxing enough without having to wrap our heads around such an unlikely couple. So we're offering some alternative theories on what's going on. J. Lo is staging an elaborate Marc Anthony distraction. If you'll recall, J. Lo gave her ex-husband an onstage smooch at the Latin Grammys, and less than a week later Anthony and his wife announced their separation. J. Lo is clearly getting back with her ex but wants to avoid taking the blame for his divorce. Thinking quickly on her feet she co-zied up to the first unsuspecting but eligible bachelor to show up to her Las Vegas residency, Drake. Meanwhile, Champagne Papi still spends his nights writing texts to Rihanna that he never sends because she still hasn't responded to the one from a month ago. He thinks being spotted out with J. Lo will catch Rihanna's attention. He's wrong.

Heidi Klum makes falling look good

It's a known fact that supermodels often possess ballerinalike grace in order to master their body movements. Although Klum has added businesswoman, actress, host and designer to her résumé, Monday she proved that she's still got those model bones. Since making her singing debut on "America's Got Talent Holiday Spectacular" by performing a rendition of "Santa Baby" with crooner contestant Sal Valentinetti, Klum has been making headlines for falling. The spin-gone-wrong didn't trip Klum up one bit, and on second look, we're wondering if she really fell at all. Klum obviously wasn't mortified by her tumble. She posted a video clip of the performance on her Twitter account, capturing the whole incident. So was this a part of the act? I think there is a strong case to be made for this being a choreographed, twirl-to-the-ground move that went way over our heads.

the word

SESALI BOWEN
sesali.bowen@metro.us

Lena Dunham's at it, again

Lena Dunham enjoys the taste of her own foot in her mouth. Most recently, the 30-year-old writer, actress and self-proclaimed feminist had to apologize for a joke that she made about abortion, of all things. During the Dec. 14 episode of her Women of the Hour podcast, Dunham shared her experience visiting a Planned Parenthood in Texas. While there, Dunham felt compelled to make it clear that while she supported people's right to choose, she had never had an abortion herself. A closer examination of this position revealed to Lena, that she, too, had internalized stigma about abortion. Recalling this event Dunham changed her approach to the topic ended the podcast with, "Now I can say that I still haven't had an abortion, but I wish I had." Because abortion is one of the hardest decisions that people have to make, many found Dunham's conclusion to be insensitive. She issued a full apology on her Instagram account saying that her comment was "distasteful" and the result of a "delusional girl" persona that she uses. We kind of picked up on that.

Tamar Braxton shades 'The Real'

Tamar Braxton, her singing sisters and their mom visited the "T.D. Jakes Show" on Tuesday. The youngest Braxton sister was asked about "The Real," the talk show she co-hosted before an abrupt departure in May. The producers of the show released a statement saying the decision for Braxton to leave the show was mutual, but some cryptic Instagram posts and footage from her "Braxton Family Values" show imply that she was fired. T.D. Jakes mentioned that the ratings for "The Real" have declined since Braxton left and she dramatically pretended to catch a "holy spirit" saying "Oh Lord, ain't that terrible. Lord Jesus … Save 'em Jesus. Resuscitate!" Translation: I'm actually unbothered by this news. In the caption to the video clip, which she posted on her Instagram, Braxton insists she wasn't being messy. But we know shade when we see it. You're not fooling us, honey. *Check out the clip at metro.us*

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Cameron Dallas says selfies are here to stay

The social-media sensation stars in Netflix's "Chasing Cameron."

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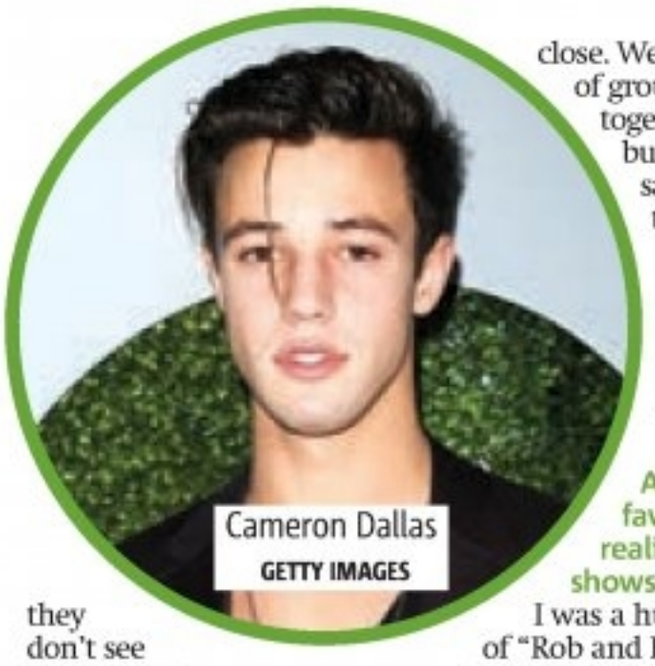
Cameron Dallas
GETTY IMAGES

Cameron Dallas knows his way around the internet.

The 22-year-old social-media star has millions of followers on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat and Vine (RIP). Now he's trying his hand at more traditional media, starring and executive producing in "Chasing Cameron," a Netflix original docuseries, premiering Dec. 27.

The reality series will follow the young talent behind the scenes as he navigates the drama and conflicts on the road with MAGCON, (Meet and Greet Convention) a touring fan fest starring his friends and fellow young social-media influencers like Aaron Carpenter and Taylor Caniff.

How are you different on the show compared to online?

They'll see me stressed out trying to wrangle all these kids and run a business at the same time; flipping the switch between being a talent and being a business owner.

I'm still being me on social media, but at the same time, fans don't see all of me on social media. They don't see me going on a business meeting with Dolce & Gabbana, they don't see the drama that happens between me and Taylor [Caniff] because we got in an argument.

A lot of your close friends you've met online.

It's the new generation. I feel like it's expected. I feel like that meme ["Slide into your DMs"] is turning into real life. Like, "I met your mom through Instagram DMs"; it's [now] true.

MAGCON seems almost like the boy bands of today.

We [the guys] are really close. We're kind of grouped together, but at the same time we have our own individual brands.

Any favorite reality shows?

I was a huge fan of "Rob and Big." Rob Dyrdek is actually someone I look up to. He's a skateboarder. Early on in his career instead of taking short-term money he would take equity in companies. He's really good overall about how he expands his business.

Do you feel like selfies are ever going to stop being a thing?

When I travel places I take selfies. I don't think so. People have always taken selfies throughout history. From Myspace until now.

The docuseries "Chasing Cameron" airing Dec. 27, follows Dallas, second right, and his crew of fellow social-media influencers on the MAGCON tour. NETFLIX

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Where to celebrate New Year's Eve in Philly

From high in the sky to cozy by a fireplace, you've got options.

JENNIFER LOGUE
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New Year's Eve is a tricky night out, and while many spend it at big lavish parties that become an alcohol-filled blur, some might prefer pacing themselves and kicking off 2017 with a relatively clear head. Whether you want to party hardy or enjoy a delicious meal to the beat off the blues, Philly has something for everyone this year.

SkyGarten: Countdown in the Sky

New Year's Eve is so much better with a view. Kick off 2017 from 51 floors up at SkyGarten, overlooking the Delaware River. The $51 cover includes party favors, binoculars, charcuterie, a dessert spread, spiked hot chocolate and one complimentary champagne toast at midnight.
8 p.m., $51, 1717 Arch St.
skygarten.com

The Twisted Tail is serving up live music and burlesque. ALL IMAGES PROVIDED

Twisted Tail: Burlesque and Blues NYE Party

Feel like indulging in Southern cooking and being whisked away by some gritty, in-your-guts blues music and a burlesque show? Check out the Twisted Tail in Society Hill on New Year's Eve. If you just want music and burlesque, the ticket is only $20 but a $125 VIP ticket gets you a four-course dinner, champagne toast at midnight and admission to the show.
9 p.m., $20-$125
509 S. Second St.
thetwistedtail.com

VF Casino: A Little Party Never Killed Nobody

Depending on how hard you party, it's quite possible to do a little damage — especially when a three-hour open bar is involved. Valley Forge Casino's A Little Party Never Killed Nobody also serves up a buffet, live entertainment and a champagne toast at midnight. If you completely destroy yourself, plan ahead and book a room at the casino, so you can sleep off your killer hangover.
Doors 8 p.m., $55+
1160 First Ave., King of Prussia,
vfcasino.com

Finn McCool's Ale House

Perhaps New Year's Eve with an Irish flare is what you're looking for? Finn McCool's Ale House is hosting their annual party with a five-hour premium open bar, buffet-style hors d'oeuvres, live DJ, a complimentary champagne toast and more. A VIP ticket will allow you access to the exclusive Room 12 Lounge.
9 p.m.-2 a.m., $59-$89
118 S. 12th St.
finnmccoolsphilly.com

The Rittenhouse Library Bar

If you feel like keeping it classy while keeping it chill, swing by The Rittenhouse Hotel's Library Bar for New Year's Eve. The Peter Guadioso Trio will perform live jazz from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. and you can sip handcrafted cocktails at your leisure by the warmth of the fireplace. Toasty.
9 p.m.-1 a.m. 210 W. Rittenhouse Square
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Reindeer Romp in Fairmount

Kick off your Christmas weekend celebrations a few days early at the 19th annual Reindeer Romp throughout Fairmount. Around 1,500 people are expected for what is essentially a bar crawl to watering holes throughout the neighborhood. Your $10 admission fee grants you discounts at most stops and a pair of antlers so you can easily keep up with your pack.
Dec. 22, 6-11 p.m.
Fairmount Area
23rd and Fairmount streets
$10, philly2night.com

Ugly Sweater Holiday Boat Party

Drink Philly brings together two favorite ways to fete the holidays: ugly sweaters and lots of booze. The three-hour tour on the Spirit of Philadelphia boasts an open bar with all the craft brews, wine and cocktails your heart desires. Your ticket also grants you a buffet dinner, DJ-led dance party and awesome views of the skyline from the Delaware River — well, at least until you lose focus.
Dec. 23, 6:30-9 p.m.
Spirit of Philadelphia
401 S. Columbus Blvd.
$52, thedrinknation.com

FAMILY

Disney on Ice

Santa's not the only jolly soul coming to town this week. Starting Dec. 23, a bunch of Disney's most-loved faces will skate into the Wells Fargo Center for a week-plus run of Disney on Ice. Called "Follow Your Heart," the show features vignettes from "Finding Dory," "Inside Out," and OGs Mickey and Minnie.
Dec. 23-Jan. 2
Wells Fargo Center
3601 S. Broad St.
$20-$117
wellsfargocenterphilly.com

ON THE RADIO

"The Night Before on XPN" with Robert Drake

On Christmas Eve, tune into WXPN for the 24th iteration of Robert Drake's "The Night Before on XPN." Now a bona fide Philly tradition, the radio show features 24 hours of some of the most obscure and bizarre Christmas records you've never heard, and a sprinkling of Drake's trademark banter. If just listening isn't enough, you can watch him in action via the Jingle Cam at xpn.org.
Dec. 24, midnight
WXPN 88.5, xpn.org

25-Hour Holiday Radio Show

For an off-beat, decidedly punk- and indie-flavored collection of holiday music, turn your radio dial to WPRB for DJ Jon Solomon's long-running 25-Hour Holiday Radio Show. His set goes from 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve to 6 p.m. on Christmas Day. In the past, he's regaled us with jams from The Dead Milkmen and The Jukebox Zeros, and the most Philly-style version of "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" you'll ever hear.
Dec. 24, 5 p.m.
WPRB 103.3, wprb.com

FAMILY

Holiday Garden Railway: Friday Night Lights

Morris Arboretum stays open after hours to invite folks in to witness its Holiday Garden Railway all lit up with twinkling white lights and perky evergreens. You navigate a life-size forest to find miniature trains chugging along a quarter-mile track, past adorable holiday villages and winter gardens. During this special evening event, the Arboretum's cafe will be open with drinks and light bites.
Dec. 23, 4:30-7:30 p.m.
Morris Arboretum
100 E. Northwestern Ave.
$16, morrisarboretum.org

Be captivated by the Holiday Garden Railway. PROVIDED

JEWISH ON CHRISTMAS

Being __ at Christmas

The city will be virtually shut down Dec. 25, but those not celebrating Christmas can find a variety of things to do — whether it be dining out on a Feast of Seven Fishes or hitting up the National Museum of American Jewish History for a day of culture and nondenominational fun. Your ticket gets you free access to the museum galleries along with fun to-dos, like an art-making workshop with The Clay Studio and a live concert by Emmy-winning kindie group Alex & the Kaleidoscope.
Dec. 25, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
National Museum of American Jewish History
10 S. Independence Mall
$12, nmajh.org

MUSIC & DANCING

Boogie Down

The Dolphin Tavern throws a free dance party worthy of those awesome "Soul Train" dance offs we watch and love on YouTube. DJ Dame Luz invites you to bring your boogie A-game as she plays an oh-so-danceable playlist of disco, funk and old school hip-hop jams.
Dec. 22, 10 p.m.
The Dolphin Tavern
1539 S. Broad St.
Free, dolphinphilly.com

MUSIC & DANCING

Marshmello

Are you ready for Marshmello? PROVIDED

It's an astronaut! It's Frosty! It's ... Marshmello! In the vein of Deadmau5 and Daft Punk before him, Marshmello is an anonymous music producer donning a white suit and glowing, boxy mask. You don't have to know who it is to enjoy his tunes, though. The Fillmore will be packed Friday night with youngsters jamming to his setlist of beat-heavy megahits that have featured artists like Justin Bieber and Wrabel.
Dec. 23, 8-11 p.m.
The Fillmore Philadelphia
29 E. Allen St.
$23.50, thefillmorephilly.com

Condition Oakland

A lineup of edgy turntablists come together at Kung Fu Necktie Friday night for an evening of dancing to benefit victims of the tragic Ghostship fire in Oakland. Look out for DJ sets from Void Vision, Deflector and Speaking Parts, and a live performance by Slow Tongued Beauty, whose work is described as "ambient static-scapes punk."
Dec. 23, 10 p.m., Kung Fu Necktie
1250 N. Front St., $7
kungfunecktie.com JOSH MIDDLETON

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Discover Georgia

This under-the-radar charmer boasts unique culture and attractions.

Fodor's Travel

The country, that is. GETTY IMAGES

Georgia is so far off the tourist track that if you mention you're headed there, you'll probably get an earful on peaches and Savannah, not the tiny country sandwiched between Europe and Asia that shares the same name. But now more than ever, in-the-know travelers are buzzing about its many unsung attractions: glaciated peaks that dwarf the Alps, mysterious cave cities hewn into mountainsides and amber wines that the world's top sommeliers can't stop talking about. To seal the deal, Georgia is affordable these days — half-the-price-of-Europe affordable — which means there's no better time to catch a flight to the Caucasus.

Breathtaking mountains

Although Georgia is smaller than South Carolina, four of Europe's 10 tallest mountains can be found there, and on a clear day, you can see snowy peaks from almost anywhere in the country. Well-marked trails and affordable mountaineering packages draw alpinists, both amateur and expert, from around the world. But you don't need to lace up your hiking boots to make the most of the Caucasus. Consider galloping on horseback through mountain passes at Zeta Camp, hiking to Chaladi Glacier in Mestia, whitewater rafting in Borjomi, or off-road driving in Tusheti with Inter Georgia Travel.

East-meets-West cuisine

For centuries, Georgia occupied a strategic location along the Silk Road that linked China to the Mediterranean, and as merchants passed through the Caucasus, Georgia's culinary repertoire broadened to adopt new ingredients and techniques from both continents. Most meals start with a Mediterranean-style cucumber and tomato salad drizzled with oil. But then the pendulum might swing east with a dish like khinkali, soup dumplings with fenugreek-spiced filling. Then India might spring to mind as you tear off a piece of shotis puri, a naanlike bread baked to chewy perfection on the walls of a tandoor. But certain flavors are unmistakably Georgian, like walnut-thickened stews, grassy sulguni cheese or puckering tkemali, an addictive plum compote that's an ideal counterpoint to grilled meats.

Polyphonic folk music

Complex harmonies are not reserved for concert halls in Georgia; you're just as likely to hear a spellbinding performance around a dinner table. These polyphonic folk songs can be lively or somber, depending on the mood, but the stories they tell chronicle the nation's precious oral history from pre-Christian times to the present. There's a terrific little ensemble called Zedashe that's worth seeking out; if their tour dates don't align with your schedule, they sometimes have impromptu jam sessions at Pheasant's Tears winery in Sighnaghi.

Seaside towns

Georgia may be known for its soaring peaks, but the oft-overlooked Black Sea coast is worth adding to the itinerary, particularly when it's warm outside and the bars along the rocky beaches come to life. Batumi, the country's most popular resort, is the Las Vegas of Georgia — all neon lights, casinos and nightclubs. Tranquility is easier to find farther north in villages like Grigoleti, whose beaches of fine magnetic sand are said to be therapeutic for the bones and joints.

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Prehistoric cave cities

Georgia is home to three major cave complexes: Uplistsikhe, Davit Gareja and Vardzia. The oldest, and closest to Tbilisi, is Uplistsikhe, dating back to the early Iron Age. Its twisty, irregular rock formations call to mind Gaudi's naturalist works. Farther east, the still-active Davit Gareja monastery complex, with colorful frescoes and desert views into neighboring Azerbaijan, is a more enriching experience, provided you have the better part of a day to spare (the Gareji Line is the most comfortable way to get there). Vardzia lies even farther afield, but its labyrinthine network of 235 chambers are awe-inspiring.

World-class museums

In 1991, a group of archaeologists excavating Dmanisi, in southern Georgia, uncovered the oldest human remains found in Eurasia to date. You can see the "1.8-million-year-old girl" at the Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi as part of the permanent collection, which also includes a trove of prehistoric jewelry and a thought-provoking exhibition on the Soviet occupation. For those who are especially curious about the latter, the Stalin Museum in Gori — his birthplace — offers excellent guided tours through immense collections of Communist-era paraphernalia, including Stalin's armored railway carriage.

All of Tbilisi turns out for the Tbilisoba Arts Festival. VANO SHLAMOV, AFP

Whirlwind dances

Focus on a Georgian dancer's legs as he's performing, and you may notice an unexpected adornment: kneepads. They come in handy in the Mtiuluri mountain dances that require the men to jump into the air, twirl around and land squarely on their knees. Equally spectacular are the ethereal Kartuli numbers, in which a female dancer glides across the stage in a large, billowy dress, creating the illusion of hovering. Sukhishvili National Ballet is the country's premier dance company, but if they're out of town (they usually are), don't fret: The choreography on display at Tsiskvili, a fine-dining restaurant on the outskirts of the capital, will keep you transfixed for an entire evening.

Fantastic skiing

Georgia is one of the world's best bargains when it comes to skiing and snowboarding. Altitudes here surpass those of the Alps, but at about $12 per day, lift tickets are a fraction of what you might pay Stateside or in Europe. There are six ski resorts in Georgia but Gudauri, located two hours north of Tbilisi, eclipses the competition with 35 miles of slopes to traverse. Their heli-ski tours, suitable for only the most intrepid athletes, give skiers the rare opportunity to barrel down a mountainside from 13,000 feet.

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3 Things to watch for as the Eagles host the Giants

The Eagles are still winless in the NFC East as they prepare to play a division rival for the fifth time.

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The Eagles have nothing to play for but pride.

Luckily for them, they'll be playing a heated division rival in prime time Thursday night — a contest they'll surely find a way to get themselves up for — as the 10-2 Giants come to town.

Even with a 5-9 record and disappointing one-point loss in Baltimore last week, the Eagles have a lot to build on and fans will be looking to see progress from rookie Carson Wentz and from an incredibly inconsistent defense.

Here are three things to watch for when things kick off on NBC10 at 8:25 p.m:

1 Life in the fast Lane

What was the turning point in the Eagles' season? Losing right tackle Lane Johnson.

After going 3-1 to start the season the offensive lineman was suspended, threw the unit into disarray and hastened lackluster play from Wentz under center. Johnson has practiced this week and will suit up and start against the Giants Sunday.

"He looks good," head coach Doug Pederson said. "He's got a lot of energy, obviously. We always kid the guys that missed time with fresh legs. He's energetic and he's eager and he's ready to go. He had a good week of practice. [He is] mentally into it and he's excited."

2 Division doughnut

The Eagles are 0-4 in the NFC East this year with two contests remaining, Thursday against New York and Jan. 1 against Dallas. If they lose both, the Birds would go winless in the division for only the fourth time in the history of the franchise.

"I think the division speaks for itself," Pederson said. "I think it's one of the toughest divisions in the National Football League. It's been one of those divisions where any team at the beginning of the year obviously has high hopes and expectations to win that division. We were one of those teams. Nobody wants to not win a game in their division. So we're trying on Thursday night our best to try to eliminate that."

3 Wentz momentum

After a dreary start to last week, Wentz shook off a bad interception and led the Eagles on a touchdown march in the final seconds to potentially tie (or win, had the Eagles converted a two-point conversion attempt) and looked like a seasoned pro.

Eagles fans and coaches will look for the QB to build on that against the Giants Thursday.

"I think as a quarterback and young quarterback, those are valuable experiences that you will cherish and remember and lean on the rest of your career," Pederson said. "For the guys to see him do that just shows the leadership capability that he has to lead the football team and put us in those situations."

For the Eagles, shutting down Odell Beckham Jr. will be a top priority Thursday. GETTY IMAGES

KONECNY PLAYS SANTA WHEN NOT PLAYING FORWARD

Keeping up with Konecny
By Kyle Phillippi

Santa Claus is characterized by his jolly-nature and round belly.

The latter part doesn't fit at all when describing Flyers rookie Travis Konecny, but the former certainly does, which is why he was the perfect choice to don an orange Santa suit as he and a few of his teammates surprised those at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia on Tuesday.

"It was a lot of fun [on Tuesday] being able to put a smile on the kids' faces," Konecny said. "They deserve that. It's just awesome for us being able to give back. They've been through a lot, it literally takes nothing for us to come here and give back and just support the community. To see the kids happy, it's just awesome."

Konecny was joined at the hospital by Brayden Schenn, Wayne Simmonds, Jake Voracek, Michael Del Zotto and Michael Raffl.

The players spent an hour at the facility doing everything from arts and crafts to handing out gifts to simply having conversations with the children.

Travis Konecny is embracing every aspect of being an NHL player. GETTY IMAGES

"Seeing a lot of smiles on the kids' faces, that's what it's all about," Konecny said. "We always enjoy when we get to do that."

Konecny can't point to one specific interaction as being more memorable than the other. To him, every visit he had was special in its own right.

"Each and every kid is great," Konecny said. "You had an opportunity to get to know each and every one of them, learn what they're into, their hobbies, favorite sports, whatever it was … the kids were so excited to see some of us."

The visit comes at a great time for two reasons. First, giving back and dedicating your time to improve someone else's day is what Christmas is all about. Second, it proved to be a nice step back from everything going on at the rink.

The Flyers are two losses removed from a historical 10-game winning streak that placed them right in the middle of the playoff race. Being able to take a breather after that determined run was certainly welcomed, particularly by Konecny.

The 19-year-old goes into Wednesday's game with Washington on a 19-game goal-less drought. Before that, he had scored four goals in the first 15 games.

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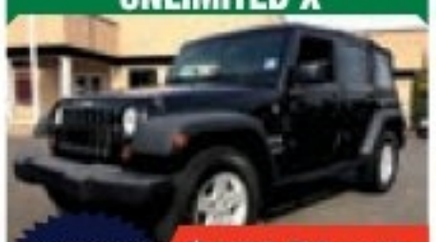
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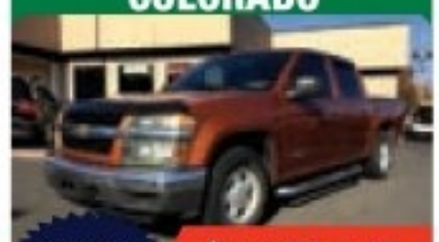
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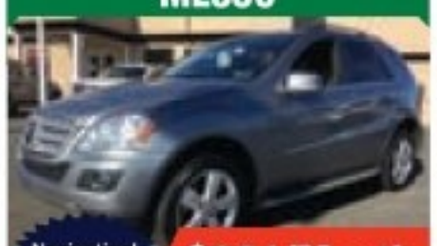
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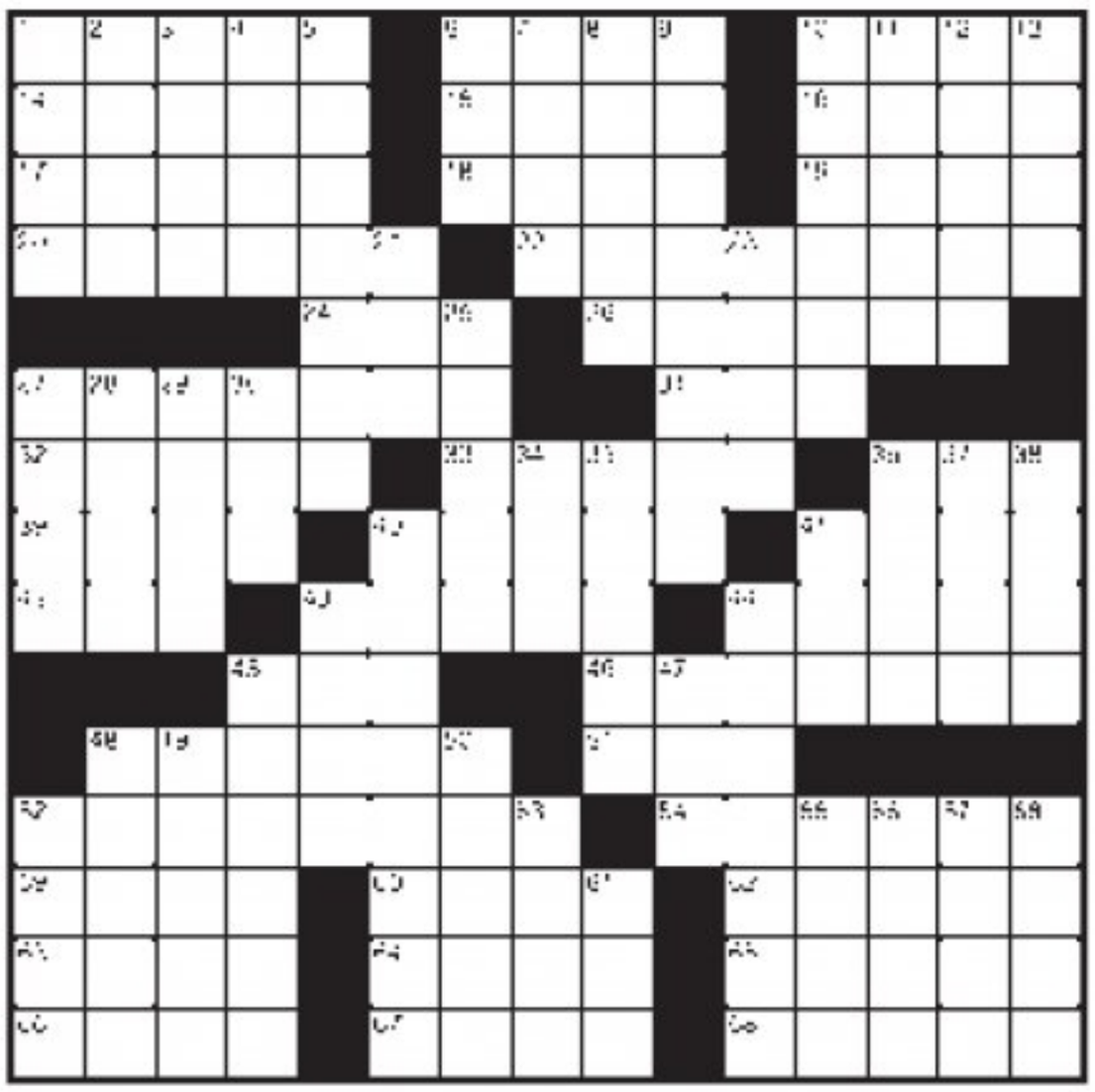
Across

1 Abbot's underling
6 -- nelson
10 Auntie of fiction
14 Maureen of the screen
15 Horror-film servant
16 Lemony
17 Washington waterway
18 Franc's replacer
19 Singer -- Hendryx
20 Polished
22 Wavelength unit
24 Size above med.
26 Trip to the top
27 Apples or potatoes
31 Sidekick
32 Priggish
33 Bwana, in India
36 Consumer org.
39 Hop, skip or jump
40 Ruffly front
41 Corrida sight
42 Frat letter
43 Type of canoe
44 Slinky toy shape
45 Dickens
46 Green science
48 Dirty politics
51 Bottom line
52 Joking around
54 Crown
59 Costa --
60 Footnote abbr. (2 wds.)
62 Title role for Madonna
63 FitzGerald's poet
64 Baja Ms.
65 Splinter groups
66 Volcano goddess
67 Bristle with
68 Buy a round

Down

1 Firecracker noises
2 Baba au --
3 "Othello" heavy
4 Black-and-white snack
5 Clanked
6 Hotfoot it
7 Water, in Madrid
8 "-- Doone"
9 Pond algae (2 wds.)
10 Fireplace ledge
11 Kind of squash
12 North Dakota city
13 Party-tray cheese
21 Elev.
23 Nature's bandage
25 Dryden work
27 Host's plea
28 Sporty trucks
29 Graceful wrap
30 Bro or sis
34 Org. for lawyers
35 Phonies it up
36 String tie
37 Tar's jug
38 Too squared off
40 Flashiest
41 Util. bill
43 Zen riddle
44 Most cozy
45 Obey a caveat
47 Heifer's mouthful
48 Slug's trail
49 Slow train
50 -- nous
52 Riding whip
53 Concert proceeds
55 Maintain
56 Mince
57 Singer James
58 Sail support
61 Take it on the --



metro.us/sudoku

easy

		9			5			
				7	4	5	6	3
				6		7		9
	7		8	4		2		
9				1				7
		4		3	7		8	
4		3		8				
8	2	1	4	9				
			2			3		

hard

7	3		2	5				4
5	1		7				9	
				3	9			5
	2					1		8
1		4					2	
4			8	9				
	6				1		3	9
9				2	6		8	1

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Make romance, health and children your priorities. Your actions will be what counts when it comes to your personal life. Don't take on unnecessary responsibilities.

Taurus Don't feel the need to take on too much responsibility over the holiday season. You owe it to your family to spend some downtime with them.

Gemini Tie up unfinished business. Stay focused on building strong relationships with the people who can influence your future. Make romance a priority.

Cancer Socializing with friends is encouraged, as long as you aren't indulgent. A discussion with a personal or professional partner will turn sour.

Leo Do something special. Make travel plans or engage in something unique that will enlighten you and bring you closer to making an important decision.

Virgo Take care of any year-end tasks that an older relative is having trouble doing. It will end up being fulfilling for you, and the thanks you receive will be worth your while.

Libra Keep your life simple and refuse to overspend just to appease someone. You cannot buy love or forgiveness. Truth and genuine concern will win someone over.

Scorpio Offering your time to help a cause you believe in is fine, but don't feel you have to pay for others' problems or mistakes. Charity begins at home.

Sagittarius Make changes at home that will add to the year-end festivities. Aim to bring joy to the people you love through gestures of kindness and small offers of gratitude.

Capricorn Moderation will be important. Whether shopping, socializing or engaging in robust conversation, keep in mind that life is simple until one opts to make it complex.

Aquarius A personal change will turn out better than anticipated. Make preparations that will help you head in the best direction possible. Express your feelings.

Pisces You can mix business with pleasure in order to form better alliances. Engaging in open discussion will help you advance.

EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

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	20	TOVE LO
MAR	18	BORGORE
	22	SENSES FAIL
MAR	29	WILLIAM SINGE
APR	01	BLUE OCTOBER
	05	ANTHRAX & KILLSWITCH ENGAGE
	23	TESTAMENT
	29	BONOBO
MAY	06	MASTODON / OPETH / GOJIRA / EAGLES OF DEATH METAL
JUN	05	NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS wxpn

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